

United States Senate, Office of Fred Thompson  
Washington, DC  
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FRED THOMPSON  
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COMMITTEES:  
CHAIRMAN, GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
FINANCE

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4204  
<http://thompson.senate.gov>

January 25, 2001

Mr. Gary S. Hartman  
U.S. Department of Energy  
Oak Ridge Operations Office  
Post Office Box 2001  
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831

Dear Mr. Hartman:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Department of Energy's effort to modernize the Y-12 National Security Complex to ensure that it is capable of fulfilling its critically important national security mission into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Y-12 is the oldest of the nation's nuclear weapons production facilities. Many of its buildings date back to the days of the original Manhattan Project, and pose significant infrastructure and operational challenges. Yet, despite these shortcomings, in recent years we have been asking our nuclear weapons production plants to do more work with less money. The time has come to acknowledge that we must invest in the modernization of facilities like Y-12 if we are going to maintain a strong nuclear deterrent in the future.

For this reason, I support the construction of a new Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) Storage Facility and a new Special Materials Complex as outlined in the Department's Preferred Alternative -- Alternative Four -- in the Draft Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement for the Oak Ridge Y-12 Plant (SWEIS). These facilities are critical to ensuring that Y-12 is able to perform the missions assigned to it through previous Departmental Records of Decision, while at the same time working to ensure that our nuclear weapons stockpile is safe and effective.

Both the 1999 Thirty-Day Review of the Stockpile Stewardship Program and the recently-issued Defense Programs Facilities and Infrastructure Assessment, Phase One, concluded that rapid action is needed to stop the deterioration of our aging nuclear weapons complex. The Y-12 plant is an integral part of that complex. I look forward to working with the Department to support the modernization initiatives necessary to equip this important facility for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Sincerely,



Fred Thompson  
United States Senator

FDT:lw

cc: The Honorable Spence Abraham

Comment No. 1  
Comment noted.

1/22

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